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LETTER DATED 27 OCTOBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government and with reference to the letter dated 26 October 1998 from the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission (S/1998/995) and its annex, the report of the Group of International Experts on VX, addressed to the President of the Security Council, I have the honour to convey the following comments.

1. The 40 samples taken in July 1998 and analysed by the Swiss laboratory did not show chemical-warfare-related chemicals.

The 43 samples taken in July 1998 and analysed by the United States laboratory did not show any chemical-warfare-related chemicals.

The 39 samples taken in July by the French laboratory did not show any chemical-warfare-related chemicals; one sample, however, showed a chemical material known as MPA (methylphosphonic acid) which could be related to chemical warfare agents of the V or the G group but is not exclusively related to them as it could also be related to other types of non-chemical-warfare-related chemicals.

Therefore, 122 analytical results prove that there were no chemical-warfare-related chemicals and one sample shows a substance that could or could not be related to chemical-warfare material.

The Special Commission chose to seize on this one sample against all the other results and demanded from Iraq an explanation. This is an obvious attempt to deflect attention from the overwhelming evidence in support of Iraq's declarations that no VX was stabilized and weaponized.

2. The conclusion that seems out of context in the report is the following:

> "The existence of VX degradation products conflicts with Iraq's declarations that the unilaterally destroyed special warheads had never been filled with any chemical warfare agents."

We do not find the international experts agreeing that VX degradation products were found in the last three sets of analyses of 123 samples. Perhaps this is a reference to the first set of analyses that were suspect from the very beginning and against which Iraq vigorously protested. It is to be recalled that the Special Commission agreed to conduct a thorough analysis by other laboratories in order to put an end to this problem. The results clearly show that no VX-related material was found. It is also obvious that the Special Commission is intent on procrastination by seeking explanations from Iraq on questions that are academic in nature and answers that may or may not be satisfactory.

3. Once again, we wish to make it clear that:

(a) All the information, spanning hundreds of pages of details, reports, tables and analyses related to VX research and development and production attempts, covering the period up to the end of 1990, has been presented to the Special Commission in the June 1996 full, final and complete disclosure and subsequent clarification and presentations during the technical evaluation meetings up to July 1998, and there is essentially nothing new to add.

(b) The amounts of VX produced during research and development production trials on two occasions are accounted for in reports and/or material balance of precursor chemicals.

(c) Iraq never produced VX in stable form to weaponize and never weaponized agent VX.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Iraq to the United Nations